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Written statement* submitted by the First Modern Agro. Tools - Common Initiative Group (FI.MO.AT.C.I.G), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[18 May 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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"De facto statelessness" of the anglophone Linguistic Minority in Cameroon

The Anglophone linguistic minority problem in Cameroon originates not from the fact that Anglophones in Cameroon are not considered as Cameroonian nationals by the 36-year old rule government in power under the operation of its law; the main contention is that the nationalities of the Anglophone linguistic minority in Cameroon is not effective. This is "de facto statelessness".

Anglophones are marginalized and discriminated up to the highest level in government by the majority francophone government officials at the public service and military and then treated like second class citizens in recruitments, treatment of official documents. Anglophone names on official documents are easily identified and then discriminated in government. A minister once likens the union between Anglophones and francophone people in Cameroon to a cube of sugar dropped in a basin of water. A Minister also once said an Anglophone cannot be president in Cameroon.

The law is clear and impartial but those in position of authority are mainly the francophone people in Cameroon and they do not follow the letter of the law.

The manner in which government officials who are mainly francophone people apply its nationalities laws in practice on the Anglophone linguistic minority is partial, incompetent francophone authorities in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon do not interpret the law rightfully especially the common law-the Anglophone law.

Cameroonian nationality is granted based on links through families or through territory, place of birth, parents who are Cameroonians and habitual resident in Cameroon, it is the practical aspect on how the Anglophone linguistic minority are treated that is important.

In line with the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on minority issues to bring out the root causes of statelessness and the specific conditions or barriers that result in a huge proportion of the world's stateless persons belonging to minorities we would like to briefly say that the root causes of the "de facto statelessness" of the Anglophone linguistic minority in Cameroon is the referendum in 1961 where west Cameroonians (Anglophone linguistic Minority) were not permitted to achieve self-independence, followed by a unilateral change of a referral decision on the two-state federation of francophone people and the Anglophones in Cameroon to a republic of Cameroon to the detriment of the Anglophone linguistic minority.

Moreover the centralized nature of Cameroonian unitary state makes things, very difficult to Anglophones due to language barrier when they have to encounter the central government, further compounded by the gradual eradication of the English culture in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon which is assimilation.

The ongoing crises in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon resulting from the de facto statelessness of the Anglophone linguistic minority in Cameroon have reached an alarming level where the government has declared war on the Anglophone people of Cameroon.

The state on its pedestal has chosen to use the gun instead of calling for inclusive dialogue and has classified people fighting for their rights as terrorists and rebels. Food and cash crops are destroyed by the military. Civilians flee their homes and live in bushes or forests. This is mostly in places of battling between the military and the so-called Ambazonian defense forces (ADF).

Ending these crises without solving the Anglophone problem would do no good as there is a very high potential of the crises to continue for the next two years and the crises would come again one day if the problem is not solved.

What further role could the United Nations and international organizations play to increase awareness of statelessness as a minority issue?

Many have recommended several solutions to the Anglophone problem of de facto statelessness including:

- Cessation of southern Cameroon from la republic du Cameroon.
- The re-establishment of a two-state federation.
- Permitting an Anglophone also become head of state in Cameroon.
- Compensation of Anglophones with something for not asking a third question at independence and for the unilateral change of a referral decision to our disadvantage.
- The employment of pure English speaking Cameroonians in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon just with a few French speaking Cameroonians. French speaking Cameroonians cannot dominate the Anglophones in the public service, the military and the private sector in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.
- The re-establishment of an Anglo-Saxon system and culture in all aspect in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.